

TO THE HONORABLE KNIGHTS, CITIZENS, AND BVRGESSES OF THE HOVSE OF COMMONS, ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

The humble Remonstrance of *William Davenant*, Anno 1641.



Humbly beseech you to conceive, that I have absented to appeare before this honourable Assembly, rather from a besitting bashfulness, as being an ill object, then of outward sence of guilt, as being a delinquent. I did beleve if I were layed aside awhile, my Cause would be forgotten, because I knew nothing stronger but suspicions and meere opinions can be brought against me; unlesse I may particularly suffer for the old infirmity of that Nation which hath bin ever bred with liberty of speaking: and the very Mechanicks of *Spaine* are glad they are *Spaniards*, because they have liberty; and thinke, when over-speaking becomes dangerous, that then they chiefly lose the liberty of Subjects.

Confession is the neereft way to forgiveness, therefore I will make haste to accuse my selfe, and say it is possible I may be guilty of some mis-becoming words, yet not words made in dangerous principles and maximes, but loose Arguments, disputed at Table perhaps, with too much fancy and heat. And as in speaking, so in writing, I meane in Letters, I have perhaps committed errors, but never irreverently or maliciously against Parliamentary government.

I have beene admitted into the company of these noble Gentlemen that are absent, but never was taken into their counsels: and sure for two of them, *Master Iarmin* and *Sir John Suckling*, with whom I was more particularly acquainted, they were strangely altered, and in a very short time, if it were possible they could designe any thing against your happy and glorious proceedings, who both in their writings and speech have so often extold the naturall necessity of Parliaments here, with extreame scorne upon the incapacity of any that should perswade the KING he could be fortunate without them.

And it is not long since I wrote to the Queenes Majesty in praise of her inclination to become this way the Peoples advocate, the which they presented to her; for the Arguments sake it is extant in good hands, and now mentioned, in hope it may be accepted as a Record of my integrity to the Common-wealth.

It becomes not me to meddle with businesses so farre above my reach, but that I perceive I am unfortunately mistaken to be ill-affected.

I doe not certainly know, I protest before God and you, that I have spoken or written any thing that may endanger me, but as I urged before, it is generally whispered, and upon the publication of your Warrant men did avoid me, even my old friends, like one stricken with an infectious kinde of death; so terrible already is every marke of your displeasure growne; therefore I humbly beseech your pardon. If a single courage flye from your anger, and begge you would not interpret as disobedience my not appearing, since it did rather proceed from a reverend awe your displeasure bred in me; which two wayes I conceive I might incur.

First, by knowing of the departure of an ingenious Gentleman named in the Proclamation, who lay in my house. And secondly, by something which might either have escaped my tongue or pen.

Lastly, I most humbly implore, that as you daily leave to future times some examples of your Justice, so this day you will leave me to posterity as a marke of your compassion, and let not my flight or other indiscretions be my ruine, though contrary to *Dauids* opinion, I have fled from Divine power, which is yours by derivation, and chose to fall into the hands of men, which are your Officers that apprehended me.